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Denali. (photo © Todd Paris, Paris Photographics)



Meet your ESTH Rome team.
(L to R): Anne, Caron, Fede, Lee

Caron De Mars,
ESTH Counselor

Federica Signoretti,
ESTH Specialist

Michael Lee,
Office Management Specialist

Anne Rittgers, Fall '16 Intern

Partner Spotlight: National Park Service (NPS)

This year, 2016, the National Park Service celebrates the 100th anniversary of its establishment by Congress in 1916. In commemoration of this significant milestone the NPS and a nonprofit partner, the National Park Foundation, launched a movement called #FindYourPark. Find Your Park is intended to expand how the public can connect with history and culture, enjoy nature, and make new discoveries.

ESTH Intern Anne Rittgers enjoys exploring national parks in her resident state, Alaska. National

parks cover approximately 54 million acres of land in Alaska (over 60% of all land managed by the National Park Service.) Denali National Park, pictured above, is over 6 million acres in size and provides a one-of-a-kind landscape for adventure seekers of all levels.

How can you participate? Visit FindYourPark.com and use #FindYourPark on your favorite social media platforms. Participate in Find Your Park Experiences to learn, discover, be inspired, or simply have fun in national parks.

Sources: nps.gov and findyourpark.com

Conferences



ESTH Counselor Caron De Mars reads U.S. position paper at International Space Forum (photo Becky Keiser)

2016 International Space Forum

Ministers of science, education, and research; space authorities, representatives of international organizations and 36 countries convened in Trento, Italy on October 23–24. ESTH Counselor Caron De Mars led the U.S. delegation that included NASA Chief Scientist Ellen Stofan, National Science Foundation Director of International Science and Engineering Rebecca Keiser, and NASA's Paris representative Tim Tawney. Themes included the role of earth observation from space for monitoring climate change. Dr. Stofan gave a keynote speech on space data management. The interagency team in Washington, thanks to coordination by State Department's Office of Space and Advanced Technology's Physical Science Officer Chris Cannizzaro, hammered out a position paper that Counselor Caron De Mars read at the Forum. The U.S. statement highlighted our commitment to space education and cooperation, and urged the European Space Agency to join the United States, Canada, Russia, and Japan in extending support for the International Space Station.



Panelists from L to R: Min. Giannini, DCM Degnan, Prof. Alberto Quadrio Curzio, Min. Lorenzin (photo Caron De Mars)

Aspen Institute Awards

ESTH organized the Deputy Chief of Mission's participation in a panel discussion with Health Minister Beatrice Lorenzin and Education, Universities and Research Minister Stefania Giannini on "The Future of Scientific Research: Different Disciplines and International Relations" on October 26. Aspen Institute Italia organized the award ceremony to celebrate the great teamwork between American and Italian researchers that modeled non-pharmaceutical intervention to arrest the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which was a challenge for the entire world. About 90 guests from academia, business, and politics were in the audience. See more about the event on [Twitter](#).



Lorenzo Vassallo talking at Our Oceans Conference (photo Rob Mearkle)

Our Ocean Conference

Embassy Rome's ESTH team solicited commitments for and entries into [1000 Ocean Actions](#). The Vassallo Foundation chronicled its seabed-cleaning project; World Wildlife Fund-Italy featured its education program encouraging fisher folk to protect sea turtles; Legambiente included their "Monitoring Marine Debris" project and the Embassy teamed up with them for International Coastal Clean-up Day. Italians played an active role at the Our Ocean conference. Our Ocean Youth Ambassador Lorenzo Vassallo took time out from his International Visitor Leadership Program at Georgetown University to present a clip from "The Fisherman Mayor" on the film stage in the Department's Exhibition Hall during the conference (pictured). Italy's representative to the conference, Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture Director General (DG) Riccardo Rigillo, has worked with the Italian Coast Guard to implement a regulatory framework to limit and monitor swordfish catch. DG Rigillo detailed this framework at the conference as Italy's contribution to the [Safe Ocean Network](#). All elements were robustly amplified on the Mission's social media platforms.

U.S./Italian Scientific Cooperation cited during PM Renzi Visit

During Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's official visit on October 18, the White House fact sheet emphasized four key areas of U.S. cooperation with Italy: Science, Technology, and Innovation; Partners in Global Security; Strong Economic Ties; and Cultural and Heritage Exchange. In



President Obama and PM Renzi listen to the national anthem of Italy at the beginning of the Welcome ceremony during PM Renzi's official visit to Washington. (Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson)

the ESTH arena, the sheet focuses on common commitments to address climate change, reduce carbon emissions, and promote clean energy development. The two countries have had a science agreement since 1988 and have joint scientific meetings every two years. The 2015 meeting in Italy included working groups on natural hazards, agriculture, advanced materials, health, information and communication technologies, physics and astrophysics, and preserving cultural heritage. Office of Science and Technology Cooperation Director Lisa Brodey was in Italy on October 27 and 28 to discuss the working groups and themes with the Italian authorities and the Rome ESTH team. The next meeting will be held in Washington in December 2017 or January 2018. Here is the [White House fact sheet](#).

Congressional Delegation Pitts

ESTH organized a meeting on August 11 for Representative Joe Pitts (R-PA) and five other Congressional members at the Istituto Superiore di Sanita (ISS), which is the Italian equivalent of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. The group discussed the "21st Century Cures Initiative: Help and Hope for Patients Through Biomedical Innovation," as well as current or future cooperation with Italian research institutions on finding cures for rare diseases. The Italian participants included Dr. Domenica Taruscio, Director of the National Center on Rare Disease, and Dr. Stefano Vella, Director of the ISS Center for Global Health. ISS, funded with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1934, is the leading technical-scientific body of the Italian National Health Service, performing research, trials, control, counselling, documentation and training on Public Health under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.

ESTH Visitors



Minority House Leader Nancy Pelosi meets with Italian Chamber of Deputies Leader Laura Boldrini (photo Caron De Mars)

House Minority Leader Visits Italy

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi brought a delegation of seven House members to Italy and Afghanistan July 31–August 5. ESTH Counselor Caron De Mars led a team from Embassy Rome and Embassy Vatican to curate a schedule for the delegation. Representative Pelosi comes from a family of Italian immigrants and was honored with the Golden Eagle Award for her work in human rights by a non-profit organization that honors advocates of freedom and human rights. She is the second American to receive this award. We participated in meetings with Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Chamber of Deputies Speaker Laura Boldrini, and Minister of Interior Angelo Alfano. She had briefings by Embassy Rome staff, the bilateral, USUN, and Holy See ambassadors, and the Italian Department of Intelligence and Security. Overall meeting themes centered around national security, climate change, and migration. She also met with Catholic officials from the Vatican to discuss religious freedom and human rights.

Dr. Vaughan Turekian visit

The ESTH team traveled to Naples to meet Dr. Vaughan Turekian, Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State (STAS), who was invited to speak at the Naples Science Festival on October 7–9. In addition to a lecture on “Science Education as a Global Endeavor,” STAS engaged high school students at the International School of Naples on “Science Across Borders.” At the Festival, he visited both “The Big Hack” pavilion, where [Maker Faire Europe](#) organized a two-day hackathon on “The Internet of Things,” and the “Coding Girls” booth. Mission Italy Public Affairs spearheads Coding Girls, which teaches high school girls in Naples, Milan, and Rome how to write computer code, and the girls were eager to show STAS their projects. STAS gave a live interview to the radio station that sponsored the festival. “Le Scienze,” the Italian edition of Scientific American, also interviewed STAS in Naples; the interview appears in its November edition. “Le Scienze” also featured a positive editorial on U.S. science policy in that issue.

On Oct. 8, ESTH and STAS visited the Forest Service National Training Center at Castel Volturno, south of Naples, which features a forest fire simulator, an innovative training system to combat environmental emergencies (e.g. forest fires, flooding, and eco-crimes). The 3D simulator includes both operational and tactical functions that allow personnel to design and react to environmental emergencies.



Science and Technology Advisor to the Secretary Vaughan Turekian watches robot learning to toss a pizza at Naples Science Festival (photo Caron De Mars)

ESTH Visitors

Ambassador Brzezinski Promotes U.S. Arctic Activities

White House Executive Director of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee Mark Brzezinski came to Italy October 10 and 11, funded by Embassy Public Affairs. He spoke about U.S. leadership in the Arctic and the contribution of Italian government and civil society to Italy's Official Observer role on the Arctic Council at an international conference convened by the Italian government titled "The Arctic Council and the Italian Perspective" on October 10. On October 11, he spoke to more than 100 students enrolled in the Arctic Studies Master Program at the Italian Society for International Organizations (SIOI) in Rome. Watch the SIOI interview [here](#). He talked about U.S. Arctic policy under the Obama administration and highlighted that President Obama is the first sitting U.S. President to have visited the Arctic. That afternoon he spoke at a technical conference of Italian scientists about the importance of international scientific cooperation in Arctic affairs.



Danish Ambassador **Eric V. Lorenzen** (left) and Executive Director of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee **Mark Brzezinski** talking at "The Arctic Council and the Italian Perspective" (photo Caron De Mars)

Bilateral Cooperation

Disaster Cooperation between Italy and the United States

Italy has a sophisticated earth observation constellation of satellites, and supplied the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) with data to create maps after the Amatrice, Italy earthquake on August 24, in order to pinpoint affected areas and plan for reconstruction. JPL also has developed "FINDER" technology to find heartbeats under rubble to help search for survivors in earthquake-affected zones, which has been licensed to some U.S. companies. One of these firms, R4, worked through ESTH to obtain permission to assist Italian authorities following the August 24 quake. While no survivors were detected (access to the site was approved at the very end of the survival period), use of the FINDER technology helped reassure Italian authorities they could proceed in moving rubble without risking lives. After observing FINDER technology in the field, the Italian Interior Ministry expressed interest in acquiring FINDER equipment themselves. In the U.S., Oklahoma was hit with a magnitude 5.8 earthquake on September 3, 2016. ASI provided images to USGS for this region to improve our understanding of these earthquakes.

Nevada State partners with Italy's Ministry of Environment

On September 16, Rome's U.S. Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) and ESTH teams met with representatives from the State of Nevada's Economic Development Agency in Rome. This was a follow-up visit from August 2015, when FCS and ESTH hosted Nevada Governor Sandoval, who brought a delegation of scientists and economic development representatives to Italy to discuss avenues of collaboration in the areas of water resources management, climate science, and innovation. FCS and ESTH worked together to coordinate the September meetings, which included Italian Minister of the Environment (MOE) Galletti, and managed the follow-up discussions. As a result, the State of Nevada and the Italian MOE have finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which they signed in Rome in a ceremony on October 17. The MOU is designed to foster collaboration and scientific exchange in the areas of water resources management and foster investment opportunities for Italian firms in Nevada.

Ocean Protection

A Slain Italian Mayor Inspires Ocean Advocacy

Ambassador Phillips hosted a screening of the film [“The Fisherman Mayor”](#) at his residential theater on July 18. The compelling film portrays the true story of an Italian fisherman turned mayor, who transformed his seaside town’s corrupt city government and polluted shoreline into a shining example of principled governance and a healthy environment. Mayor Angelo Vassallo’s persistence and dedication revitalized his community and led to his murder in 2010 by organized crime. Following the well-received film, the Ambassador hosted a reception that included several of the slain mayor’s family members as well as Italian mayors linked to the Vassallo Foundation. The mayor’s nephew Lorenzo Vassallo spoke about his family’s continuing environmental efforts. Shortly after the screening, the Embassy was delighted to learn that Lorenzo Vassallo was selected for an International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) titled “Our Ocean Youth Ambassadors”, for youth between the ages of 18 and 25 from 25 coastal countries.

To demonstrate Embassy Rome’s ongoing commitment to support environmental action and transparent government, Chargè Kelly Degan spoke in a southern Italian town at the annual “Festival of Hope” in memory of Angelo Vassallo on September 5, the sixth anniversary of the fisherman-mayor’s death. The mayor of Peschici, a coastal town deeply involved in environmental protection and anti-corruption policy located on the Gargano Peninsula (the geographical “spur” on the back of the Italian boot), invited the Chargè and other authorities to a commemoration inside the town hall. Subsequently, the mayor opened the public celebration in the town square, where the Chargè commended the Vassallo Foundation’s efforts, and stressed the U.S. commitment to environmental causes and the rule of law. She also took the opportunity to promote the Secretary’s *Our Ocean* Conference. The slain mayor’s brother then spoke about the Vassallo

Foundation’s seabed-cleaning project, which encourages fisher folk to sort plastic and other waste trapped in their nets and bring the debris to port for recycling. Sixty tons of debris are collected annually and this [YouTube link](#) in English details the project. The President (governor) of the Puglia region, Mr. Michele Emiliano, who is encouraging other Puglia communities to join the project, made concluding remarks at the event.



L to R Mayor Tavaglione, Chargè Degan, Foundation President Dario Vassallo, and Puglia Governor Emiliano. Photo: Vassallo Foundation.

Recent Events



Beach Cleanup

Legambiente, the most widespread environmental organization in Italy, held its annual coastal clean-up this year on September 17, the designated International Coastal Clean-up Day. Rome ESTH and the Tri-Mission Green Team participated in a beach clean-up at Anzio (Lazio region, outside Rome) on September 24. The Tri-Mission beach clean-up, which was linked to the Legambiente effort, is pictured at left. Public Affairs made [this video](#) for social media outreach in English and Italian, which features Rome's ESTH Specialist and the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome at the beach.



In coordination with the Management Section, we re-started our first Tri-Mission Green Team. We have monthly meetings to brainstorm, select, and implement new initiatives. We had a Tri-Mission contest to select a logo that we'll put on water bottles, bags, and other incentives that will be awarded for green actions. Each meeting features a short talk with themes such as recycling and the community garden. The Green Team had a reusable bag drive. These are now available to use at our Navy Exchange in lieu of the standard plastic bags, and patrons are encouraged to bring them back. We have gotten off to a great start!



Pictured is Anne (fourth from the left) with other interns, ESTH, Econ, and the mugs. *(photo Tiziana Candiloro)*

We have an active Community Liaison Office that has many events that use disposable cups. The Green Team conducted a mug drive, which netted over 30 mugs in order to encourage more reuse and less waste. The mugs are kept at the CLO office, and any group in the Tri-Mission can borrow them, wash them, and return them. Our inaugural event was a breakfast to welcome ESTH Intern Anne Rittgers.

Look Ahead: 2017 Calendar

Feb. 2	World Wetlands Day
Feb. 4	World Cancer Day
Feb. 11	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
Feb. 27–March 1	USGS visit to Italy
March 3	World Wildlife Day
March 22	World Water Day
April 12	International Day of Human Space Flight
April 22	Earth Day
Apr. 24–30	World Immunization Week
May 11	Arctic Council Ministerial (Fairbanks, Alaska)
June 8	World Oceans Day
Oct. 5–6	Our Ocean Conference (Malta)
Oct. 24	World Polio Day
Nov. 13–19	World Antibiotic Awareness Week, Education Week and Global Entrepreneurship Week
Dec. 1	World AIDS Day
Dec. 2017/ Jan 2018 TBD	U.S.–Italy Joint Commission Meeting (Washington)

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